



TUITION ASSISTANCE AT VAIL MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

A Handbook for Families

THE VMS TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Vail Mountain School aims to provide assistance to mission appropriate students who would otherwise be unable to access an independent school education due to financial constraints.

The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender or sexual identity when administering educational, athletic, admission, or tuition assistance policies or programs.

PHILOSOPHY

- VMS strives to be generous and supportive with Tuition Assistance, while maintaining the belief that all families are expected to contribute to the educational costs of their child's education to the extent possible.
- Use of the FACTS Tuition Assistance Application is designed to help the school understand all financial resources that a family can use, access, and leverage in order to support their child's education.
- Only after all parental resources have been examined and exhausted can VMS provide additional support.
- VMS acknowledges the significant cost of living in our valley, and takes this into consideration when calculating awards.
- VMS acknowledges that the Tuition Assistance process can be intimidating and time consuming, and our Admission Directors are here to help you during each step of the process.

POLICY

- The Tuition Assistance budget is set annually by the Board of Trustees and is a percentage of our gross tuition revenue.
- Tuition Assistance awards range from a modest award to nearly full tuition with the average award being around 50%, allowing VMS to meet the maximum number of families' needs.
- Using the recommendations from FACTS, the Tuition Assistance Committee attempts to fund the demonstrated need of all of our admitted students.
- Additional assistance with school related fees, programs, and activities are considered upon request.

CORE VALUES OF THE VMS TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

CONFIDENTIALITY

The identities of all recipients of tuition assistance are held in the strictest confidence.

- All information shared by families in the tuition assistance process is known only to the VMS Tuition Assistance Committee (Head of School, CFO, Admission Directors, and Finance Manager)
- Information is kept confidential from others, including family members, VMS faculty/staff, and board members.
- In certain circumstances, select senior administration and faculty may be made aware of Tuition Assistance status, but only as necessary to support the needs of the student.
- Financial documents and records are securely stored by the third party, FACTS Management. Applicants complying with additional document requests shall always upload financial paperwork directly to FACTS Management.

TIMELINESS

The timeliness of your application's submittal and associated required documents (W-2, tax returns, etc.) is essential to the efficiency of the process.

- Priority status is given to families whose applications are completed **between December 1 and February 1**.
- Such priority applications have a greater likelihood of having the school able to meet the family's demonstrated need.
- Funds are finite and will often, but not always, be depleted by the spring prior to the new school year.
- Late applications, even for those who have received aid in the past, are not guaranteed to be accommodated.
- We cannot process awards for incomplete applications.

NEED BASED ASSISTANCE

The Tuition Assistance program at VMS is strictly need-based. VMS Tuition Assistance awards, which do not need to be repaid, are designed to address a family's demonstrated financial need.

DURATION OF COMMITMENT

Every family's financial situation is evaluated on an annual basis.

- Unless or until the family's financial situation changes significantly from year to year or over time, the school anticipates supporting their students with a similar percentage of tuition throughout their time at VMS.
- VMS makes every effort to meet the financial need of currently enrolled families receiving aid before offering assistance to newly admitted students and returning families who previously entered VMS without tuition assistance.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN TUITION

- Academic books required for classes
- Required summer reading books

- Lunch
- Orientation/class/Intraterm trips and most athletics travel inside the state of Colorado
- Technology device (iPads, Chromebooks, through grade 7)
- Athletic uniforms (MS/US)
- Yearbooks

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN TUITION

- After School Care (LS)
- After School Academy (LS)
- Athletics fees (MS/US)
- Tickets to VMS plays/musicals, dances, and prom
- Standardized Test and AP exam registration fees
- ECO bus pass
- Ski pass

In some circumstances, VMS may be able to provide additional assistance toward these fees. Request consideration by clicking [this Google Form](#) or through the digital version of this handbook on our [website](#).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR GRANTING AWARDS

EXPECTATION OF TWO WORKING PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- VMS expects that all parents applying for tuition assistance are working to their maximum earning potential, unless there is a documented disability, or if a parent is caring for siblings who are too young to attend school.
- Exceptions are assessed on a case by case basis.
- VMS strives to provide similar awards for multiple children attending VMS from the same family, provided the family's financial situation has not dramatically changed from year to year.
- When all children in a family are of school age, tuition assistance grants are reassessed.
- When other siblings are no longer incurring educational costs (i.e. other private school or college tuition), assistance grants are reassessed.

SEPARATED/DIVORCED FAMILIES

The Tuition Assistance Committee works carefully to understand each student's custodial situation.

- VMS must consider the financial means and personal circumstances of all (custodial and non-custodial) parents who are involved in the life of the applicant in any way.
- If separated, divorced, never married, or non-custodial, *all* parents must submit a FACTS application.
- Should a non-custodial parent be entirely absent from the life of the child, third party documentation is required as proof that said parent bears absolutely no financial, educational, or personal involvement with them. A letter of explanation from the custodial parent is also expected.

CHILD SUPPORT

VMS considers all child support dollars from all sources when calculating tuition assistance awards.

AGREEMENT OF ALL PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

- When there is more than one parent with educational decision making power, VMS expects that all parties have agreed to the applicant attending VMS before applying for tuition assistance.
- A copy of the custodial agreement should be provided to VMS as confirmation.

LOSS OR CHANGE OF EMPLOYMENT

VMS is sympathetic to the possibility that parents may find themselves suddenly unemployed. Such situations are carefully considered and require documentation and conversation between the Tuition Assistance Committee and the family before adjustments can be made to an award.

- A written appeal detailing the change or loss will be required.
- Should a parent experience a dramatic increase of employment income (or other means) as evidenced on financial documents, the School must carefully consider whether said increase will move their family into an income category that no longer qualifies for need based aid.

FAMILY LIFESTYLE CHOICES

VMS recognizes that parents make many personal choices that affect their financial ability to afford independent school tuition.

- Staying at home to raise school-age children, choosing the type and number of family vehicles, making investments in vacation homes and real estate, funding advanced educational costs, discretionary recreation and travel, and engaging their family/children in specialty sports and hobbies are examples of these lifestyle choices.
- To protect the integrity of the need-based Tuition Assistance Program, as well as maintain its fiduciary duty to the Board of Trustees, VMS cannot subsidize these lifestyle choices using the limited Tuition Assistance budget.

HOME EQUITY

Home equity and multiple property ownership are both considered in the award decision process. High home equity and additional properties owned typically indicate that a family has an increased ability to leverage assets and thus to contribute to tuition costs.

UNDERSTANDING OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME

In the application, parents must disclose all sources of income that may be used to fund their students' tuition.

- Gifts by grandparents or relatives, foundations, investment income, student assets/income, as well as the tuition assistance received by siblings attending other schools are examples of other sources of income that must be disclosed.
- If the School does know of such funding, then it feels comfortable accounting for it in grant calculations.
- Failure to disclose other sources of income/tuition payments could disqualify the student from future tuition assistance awards.

DISQUALIFICATION

Families may be requested by the Tuition Assistance Committee to supply additional information and/or have personal meetings. Failure to comply with such requests or falsification of documents can lead to the adjustment of or disqualification of tuition assistance awards.

NON-DISCLOSURE OF AWARDS

Discussing tuition assistance awards with others is prohibited and can result in revocation of tuition awards.

- Each family's personal financial information is highly confidential, as is the award they receive.
- VMS expects that families will keep their awards confidential.

APPEALS

VMS has a formal appeals process by which a family can supply new and compelling information that may result in an increase in their tuition assistance award. The form can be found [HERE](#).

- There is no guarantee that completing the form will result in any change to a family's award.